

## Union County Natural Area Inventory

### LANES CREEK FLOODPLAIN Significant Natural Heritage Area

**Site Significance:** County  
**Quadrangle:** Marshville

**Size:** 78 acres  
**Ownership:** Private

**SIGNIFICANT FEATURES:** Lanes Creek Floodplain supports a good quality floodplain forest, including eastern cottonwood trees (*Populus deltoides*), very uncommon in the county. On steep ledge slopes grows northern hairgrass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*), here near its southern limit. The site has a population of one rare plant--Piedmont aster (*Eurybia mirabilis*).

**LANDSCAPE RELATIONSHIPS:** This natural area occurs east and west of Philadelphia Church Road and surrounds part of Lanes Creek Aquatic Habitat.

**SITE DESCRIPTION:** East of the road, a loop of the creek has a floodplain terrace community of sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Shumard oak (*Quercus shumardii*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), boxelder (*Acer negundo*), and scattered shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*) and tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). Several eastern cottonwoods (*Populus deltoides*) grow near the bridge. The understory is composed mostly of ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*) and chalk maple (*Acer leucoderme*). An abandoned river channel runs across part of the terrace. A small population of eastern sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus* var. *floridus*), a Watch List plant, occurs on the terrace.

Opposite the terrace, on the south side of the creek, is a very steep slope that supports a Dry-Mesic Oak-Hickory Forest of white oak (*Quercus alba*), red oak (*Q. rubra*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), and pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*), with chalk maple and dogwood (*Cornus florida*) beneath. Locally there are a few rock ledges that support mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), northern hairgrass, and Piedmont aster (*Eurybia mirabilis*).

**MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:** Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) is invasive here and crowds out native wildflowers.

**NATURAL COMMUNITIES:** Piedmont/Low Mountain Alluvial Forest, Dry-Mesic Oak-Hickory Forest.

**RARE PLANTS:** Piedmont aster (*Eurybia mirabilis*). Watch List: eastern sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus* var. *floridus*).

**RARE ANIMALS:** Mussels in the creek: Atlantic pigtoe (*Fusconaia masoni*), creeper (*Strophitus undulatus*), and Carolina creekshell (*Villosa vaughaniana*).

#### REFERENCES:

Sorrie, B.A. 2011. Site Survey Report: Lanes Creek Floodplain. North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, Office of Conservation, Planning, and Community Affairs, DENR, Raleigh, NC.